

Washington, DC – Today, Congressman Earl Blumenauer released the following statement on President Obama's tax proposal:

"The stakes are higher for the Obama administration and the American people than merely some or all taxpayers receiving lower taxes temporarily or unemployment benefits extended thirteen months.

"This deal represents a victory for the immediate and the modest issues over the major challenges and long-term. It guarantees that these peripheral issues will dominate political discussion through the next election and beyond. It undercuts the ability of the President to be taken seriously on the major issues that confront the nation – budget deficits, national security and economic reform.

"By refusing to stare down Republicans on issues that are supported by the American people like assistance for the unemployed and not extending tax cuts for the most well off, the President loses his leverage. Obama would be supported by Congress if he vetoes proposals that are economically unsound and stands firm. There will never be a better time to shine a spotlight and make these two issues crystal clear. If the President blinks, how can he be expected to stand firm on health care reform's death by a thousand cuts? How can he have the credibility and leverage to usher in the necessary changes to how America does business?

"This agreement means two years of dithering, delay, and dissembling on the big issues: defense modernization, health reform implementation, energy security, and tax overhaul. These and more must be addressed in this decade of decision. Decisive action now by the President makes real progress possible during the remaining two years and probably a second term. Sliding past this moment with a one-sided compromise, which leaves all the problems in place and America another trillion dollars in debt, sets up the same confrontation down the road.

"The problems will still be addressed this decade, only solutions will be later, harder, and less effective while the politics get worse. I urge my colleagues to help the President and our country by rejecting this expensive and ill-advised proposal."